EDUC 512

**Component #1: Needs, Goals, and Objectives**

1) Student identifies two existing data sources and one other approach for assessing student needs and describes how these data sources will be analyzed in order to identify needs and gaps in achievement.

**Existing Data Sources:**

The data needed for determining the needs of students in this group includes their current level of academic performance, which can be collected from existing sources such as test scores and quality of work submitted for classroom and homework assignments which can be obtained from grade books and academic files. Initial assessment will also require data regarding attitudes and behaviors (positive or negative, edifying or self-defeating) in the classroom environment.

First, disaggregated school-based performance data will be used because the data is broken down into easily identifiable groups, such as low SES groups compared to middle to high SES groups, or minority groups compared to non-minority groups. The data will be analyzed by informal comparison to identify gaps in performance between groups of students and to determine the strategies and interventions needed to close these gaps (Erford, p. 288).

Second, quality of work submitted in class can identify a need for a modification of academic behaviors such as motivation (or lack thereof) and/or belief in ones abilities. After identifying a cluster of students as potential participants based on academic performance, a review of classwork and teacher reports will help identify a correlation between poor academic performance and attitudes/behaviors exhibited in the school environment.

**Additional Source:**

Lastly, informal interviews will be conducted with teachers, parents, after-school caregivers, and students to gain deeper insight regarding the needs of these students. This information will be gathered by administering surveys. The results of these surveys will be used to determine the main focus of the program (Erford, p. 290).

2) Student develops one overarching goal for the group program based on identified need; the goal aligns with the academic mission of schools.

* Students will be able to define success, apply new skills to school success and improve academic achievement as measured by standardized test scores.

3)  Student develops **two** measurable objectives for session #1 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (**one** school counseling content and **one** mathematics content).

* Students will demonstrate a motivation to learn and make an intentional effort improve performance.
* Students will apply new skills in math and increase test scores by 10%

4)  Student develops **two** measurable objectives for session #2 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (**one** school counseling content and **one** language arts content).

* Students will use active listening skills in class and participate in class activities/discussions for a better overall school presence.
* Students will apply new success skills to reading and earn 80% or higher on 9 out of 10 Reading Counts tests.

5)  Student briefly describes the importance of data-driven, needs-based programming that clearly aligns professional school counseling with the mission of schools.

Data-driven, needs-based programs are important because the data allows populations in need to be identified so that appropriate interventions can be put in place. The data shows a need and the needs-based program fulfills the need. The guidance curriculum or intervention provided students with a safe environment in which they can acknowledge areas in their school performance and personal lives that need adjustment, set goals, and put an action plan in place to achieve those goals. Programming that aligns the professional school counselor with the school’s mission creates unity in the student body and the system becomes more functional as everyone makes more of an attempt to do their part.

**Component #2: Research-Supported and Standards-Based Content**

1) Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #1 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, Professional School Counseling. Cite/attach handouts to be used.

**Session 1 Title:** The Journey to Success

**Summary of Session 1:** Students will learn the meaning of success and participate in a group discussion to identify the building blocks of success: ie Hard work and Enthusiasm.  Students will create a plan of action to apply new knowledge to their learning environment.   The desired outcomes of this group are: positive self-regard, motivation to learn, and increased effort to perform better in school.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

**Specific Group Technique:** Self-Rating and learning Self-Acceptance, supporting, modeling, positive reinforcement, skills training

**Structure:**

Session 1: Beginning

a.       Explain to the students why they are in the group and the goal of the group

b.       Review confidentiality and informed consent

c.      Overview of group environment: supportive/encouraging/caring, learn skills that will help improve academic performance and quality of relationships

d.       Overview of the group’s focus: setting goals and making plans to achieve them, building on strengths and practicing new skills, being encouraging to ourselves and others, getting better at problem solving and overcoming obstacles, challenging ourselves to reach higher (Webb, d. 194)

e.      Towers of Power – team-work/team-building exercise in which students will be broken up into groups of 2-3.  Each group will be given a bag of mini marshmallows and raw spaghetti noodles with which they will work together to build a unique tower.  The goal is to bring attention to the success skills the students already possess.

e.       Pre-group skills rating (self-assessment): Good At or Needs Improvement

Session 1: Middle

a.       Story: Think Win-Win

b.      Activity/Handout: Students will first discuss the story and the success skills demonstrated by Lily which will be listed on the Success Skills chart.  Students will then choose three vegetables to plant in their own garden and paste them in their garden baskets.  There will be a variety of vegetables to choose from and each vegetable will be matched up with a success skill on the chart.  Once seeds are chosen, children will write their skills in the space provided on their handout which provides a positive description of them.  Students can choose any goal to apply these new success skills to in the 1st session; in the second session they will discuss how to apply those same skills to academic goals.

Session 1: End/Discussion

a.      Students reflect and name the success skills they learned about and how they can help them to achieve their named goal.

b.      Students agree to work on applying these skills throughout the week.

**Structure:** This is a psychoeducational group that will last 8 sessions.  There will be one session per week and each session will last 30 minutes, from 10:30AM to 11:00AM.  Days of the week will be on a rotating basis so all group time will not be taken from one particular subject.  This group will be offered throughout the year as needs arise.

**Materials/Media:**

* Book - 7 Habits of Happy Kids by Sean Covey; title of story: Think Win-Win
* 2 pieces of poster board, glue sticks
* Handouts ~ large photo of a basket
* Vegetable picture cards and coding chart that matches each vegetable with a desired skill

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

* Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span (ASCA, p. 33)

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**

* Math: Students will be able to use the picture graph to list their chosen skills
* Language Arts: Describe characters in a story (eg. their traits, motivations, and/or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events (CCSSI)

**Objectives:** At the end of the group, students will understand the meaning of success and be equipped to behave in ways that lead to success in school and in life

**Assessments:** Pre/Post Group Assessments, Observation and Surveys

**Procedure/Instructional Strategy:** Facilitation

**Homework/Ownwork:** Practice applying new skills to real-life situations at home and in school

2) Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #2 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, Professional School Counseling. Cite/attach handouts to be used.

**Session 2 Title**: 1st Stop

**Summary of Session Two:** In session 2, students will discuss what they learned about success skills in session one and link those skills with academic achievement.  We will build a bridge from behavioral and intrapersonal success to school success.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

**Specific Group Techniques:** Self-rating and learning self-acceptance, supporting, modeling, positive reinforcement, skills training

**Structure:**

Session 2: Beginning

a.       Have students summarize the meaning of confidentiality

b.      Review what took place in the last session

c.       Discuss and celebrate success stories since the last session

Session 2: Middle

a.       Students will summarize the story from last week: Think Win-Win

b.      Review of the success skills identified

c.       Link the current list of success skills with academic success skills

d.      Set goals for academic achievement

Session 2: End

a.       Summarize the session

b.      Homework for the week

c.       Set expectations for next week

**Materials/Media:** none needed for session 2

**Core ASCA Standards:** Students will gain awareness of the benefits of educational achievement and of the relationship between work and learning

**Core State Academic Standards:**

Math: Students will use a rating scale to measure their progress

Language Arts: Students will demonstrate reading comprehension by recalling facts from the story read in session 1

3) Student identifies ASCA Standards and core academic standards covered in Session #1 and Session #2.

*ASCA National Standards incorporated in* ***session one*** *include:*

A:A1 Improve Academic Self Concept (ASCA National Model, p. 102)

A:A1.1 Articulate feelings of competence and confidence as learners

A:A1.2 Display a positive interest in learning

A:A1.3 Take pride in work and achievement

A.A1.4 Accept mistakes as essential to the learning process

A.A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning

A:A2 Acquire Skills for Improving Learning

A:A2.1 Apply time-management and task-management skills

A:A2.2 Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning

A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed

A:A2.4 Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance

*ASCA National Standards incorporated in* ***session two*** *include:*

A:A3 Achieve School Success

A:A3.1 Take responsibility for their actions

A:A3.2 Demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work

cooperatively with other students

A:A3.3 Develop a broad range of interests and abilities

A:A3.4 Demonstrate dependability, productivity and initiative

A:A3.5 Share knowledge

4) Student discusses the importance of supporting theoretical orientations and techniques in school counseling prevention and intervention programs.

**Component #3: Ethical, Legal, Multicultural**

1) Student identifies ethical and legal considerations in group work with minors in the schools and those specific to this group program.

The ASCA ethical standards state that the professional school counselor “notifies parents/guardians and staff of group participation if the counselor deems it appropriate and if consistent with school board policy or practice” (Erford, p. 30). Understanding when informed consent will be required and when it is not necessary may cause unintentional ethical violations. Initial informed consent forms being sent to parents and consistent communication regarding the group can serve to prevent any claims that the counselor violated ethics.

In working with young children in structured groups, maintaining confidentiality can prove to be a daunting task. Erford states that “in groups, there is no guaranteed confidentiality between members because there are multiple students in the session. However, there is an ethical obligation for confidentiality that leaders must uphold” (p. 28). Providing frequent reviews of expectations surrounding confidentiality as well as providing examples of when and when not to discuss group interactions helps to minimize the possibility of a breach of this agreement.

2)  Student creates a signed consent form to be distributed to parents of students prior to participation in group counseling to include limits to confidentiality in group work (attach as a supplemental form in LiveText for this section).

3) Student identifies how the group program is culturally sensitive, describes how issues of conflict, bias, prejudice, oppression, and discrimination are to be addressed during group, and identifies strategies included in the group program that promote a positive, caring, and safe learning group environments.

The participants for this group were identified based on low performance levels in reading and math.  In realizing that this population is not limited to one race or ethnicity, one religion or one culture we have discussed with each student how they may differ from the other participants but also how they have many similarities.  Ground rules will emphasize the need to show respect to everyone at all times regardless of their beliefs or experiences.

If racially charged confrontations take place, the facilitator will calmly and skillfully block that interaction, redirecting the students to a respectful open dialogue to include the cause of the incident and how they could have handled it differently.  Group members who exhibit repeated violations of respect in this manner will be asked to leave this group and possible join a more appropriate group as soon as possible.

All students will be made to feel safe at all times, even after a conflict.  The aggressor will not be judged but encouraged to speak openly about his or her feelings so the group members may offer feedback and possibly assist in setting goals to change their worldview, attitude and/or behavior.  The environment will be one that embraces diversity and human fallibility.  Students will learn that it is ok to make mistakes as long as there is a willingness to grow from mistakes made and strive to be better.

4) Student discusses the importance of carefully considering issues related to ethics, legal, professional, and cultural significance in the group process from making group opportunities available and member selection to group termination.

Based on the nature of counseling work in schools and the extremely diverse population of students being counseled, it is extremely important for School Counselors to consider ethical, legal, professional, and cultural significance when creating a group and selecting participants.  The counselor must first examine his or her likelihood to be effected by topics of racism, discrimination, stereotyping, and oppression and must also seek multicultural education and exposure to gain insight and sensitivity to cultural differences. Taking all of these things into consideration will protect the student from harm and will increase the counselor’s ability to relate to wider range of students.

Cultural diversity should be taken into consideration in the selection process as well as during the termination stage because backgrounds and beliefs will determine how a student processes information in each stage of the counseling process. Awareness will allow the counselor to comfortably fulfill the needs of each student.

**Component #4: Program Evaluation**

1)  Student creates a pre-post measure for session #1 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).

2)  Student creates a pre-post measure for session #2 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).

3)  Student briefly describes the importance of program evaluation and outcome-driven programming in professional school counseling

According to Lapan, a program’s ability to promote student growth is maximized when the conditional fit between learners and curricula is improved. This improvement can only take place when data from a program evaluation is analyzed to determine the program’s level of effectiveness. “Outcomes evaluations answer the question, “how are members different because of the group work?” (Erford, p. 296). If the results at the end of a program indicate little change, no change, or even a decline in the student’s performance the counselor is faced with a decision to either modify the program according to feedback or remove the program altogether and build an entirely new program with careful assessments and planning.

The evaluation of a program is important because the counselor needs to accept accountability for his or her interactions with the students. If the results of a program are phenomenal, the counselor needs to have evaluation documentation to show stakeholders that the work is beneficial to the students. If the results of a program are less than desired, the counselor still needs to have the evaluation data to justify time needed to change the problem areas of the program and implement it a second time. The results from a revised program will be critical because if it does not produce favorable results it could be doing more harm than good and would most likely need to be removed from the list of services offered at the school.

References

National Model ASCA: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, 2nd Edition. American

School Counselor Association. Alexandria, Virginia.

Brigman, G., Lane, D., Switzer, D., Lane, D., Lawrence, R. (1999). Teaching children school

success skills. *The Journal for Educational Research, 92:6* p. 323-329

Erford, B. T., (2010). Group Work in the Schools. Pearson Education, Inc. Boston,

Massachusetts.

Lapan, R. T. (2001). Results-based comprehensive guidance and counseling programs: A

framework for planning and evaluation. *Professional School Counseling, 4:4*

Webb, L., Brigman, G. A. (2008). Student success skills: A structured group intervention for

School counselors. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 32:2* p. 190-201.